

OBITUARY

from hollywood
i drove to the westside
ate lunch
then shot down stocker east
through south central
up martin luther king boulevard
jazz till 2 a.m.
and watched crossing
guards escort boys
and girls across the street
passed sunshine
bright
clear
the calling card lounge
the ski hut's
chain-locked door
the menlo room
closed since 1948
and the coliseum
cracked and beat
2 riots and 7 earthquakes
to figureoa
turned left and moved beyond
julie's trojan barrel
green light
red light
cachao and eddie palmieri
oscar 'd leon
and war
pumping through air
a black lincoln
cuts in front
booming bass
cruising
into downtown civic
center next to
beggar jack
the shoe shine boy
and the one-legged
wheelchair-bound
vietnam veteran who
whispers good morning
every afternoon
subterranean park
up the stairs
sit and dial
974-2233
you have 1 message
press 1 to listen
press 2 to ...
press

"hey lawrence
this is your brother sean
i don't know if you
heard
but they're saying
on the news that
bukowski's
dead"

— Lawrence Welsh

Los Angeles CA

THE SHIMMERING WALL

On the wall of my workroom
are pictures of writers
that I admire,
photos I've clipped over the years
& tacked up there
to give me a little help
when the blank white sheet
starts staring back at me:

Pound lounging in his Paris studio with friends,
F. Scott with Zelda on the deck of an ocean liner,
Hemingway drinking in a crowded Havana bar,
T.S. giving a reading at Sylvia Beach's bookshop,
Joyce at a tea party playing his mandolin...

Then there's the picture of Céline
alone,
an old man
alone in the dining room
of his ramshackle house at Meudon.
It's dead of winter but the fireplace is dark.
He sits at the large round table
wearing an overcoat & scarf.
The table's cluttered with his writing,
some of it in stacks, some scattered
among the pencils & pens, a bottle of ink,
two knobby apples, half a sandwich, a cup & saucer...

Céline looks up hopelessly at the camera;
he's waiting for death to knock,
death does knock.

Now Bukowski's dead,
dead as his beloved Beethoven.

Bukowski & Céline were brothers;
a couple of pirates, two lone wolves,
who loved their cats more than they did humankind.